

## **R6 EJ Annual Reports Request Submission (10/17)**

### **Crossett, Arkansas**

EPA has been working in Crossett, Arkansas, to address concerns related to air emissions and water discharges since February 2014. Crossett has a population of about 5,500 residents and is located in southeastern Arkansas just nine miles north of the state's border with Louisiana. Residents from one of Crossett's predominantly African-American neighborhoods have been concerned for many years about hydrogen sulfide emissions from the local paper facility. They formed Crossett Concerned Citizens for Environmental Justice (CCCEJ) to help their efforts with the facility, which includes a paper mill, plywood mill (currently inactive), and two chemical plants. EPA worked in partnership with State agencies, local officials, and the community to address their concerns. Region 6 drafted the Crossett Community Action Plan and Arkansas Environmental Justice Collaborative Action Plan to identify actions to be taken with its partners and to report progress to all stakeholders. The region examined 10 years of sanitary surveys and Consumer Confidence Reports for the four public drinking water systems that serve the Crossett area. It also examined a fifth sanitary survey for the paper mill, which is not a community water system. The review showed the public drinking water systems tested were in compliance with all state and federal drinking water rules. EPA shared the results of the analysis in a report to CCCEJ. EPA's enforcement staff also conducted comprehensive inspections of the facility to evaluate compliance with Clean Air Act requirements resulting in several corrective actions. Additionally, EPA asked the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to engage with the community's concerns. ADH completed a health consultation on community drinking water and health outcomes in 2016. In the document, drinking water samples and cancer statistics were evaluated and water data were reviewed from the community to determine if potential exposure risks existed. The ADH and ATSDR review concluded that the community drinking water posed no risk to public health and that there was no significant difference to indicate elevated cancer levers for Ashley County where Crossett is located. EPA has also worked to bring the community's concerns directly to the local paper facility, participating in public meetings with the community as well as state and local officials and the company. Region 6 also organized a meeting with CCCEJ and company representatives in an effort to improve communication and cooperation. EPA's coordination with ADEQ and the facility has resulted in several air-monitoring projects to better understand hydrogen sulfide emissions. The most recent air monitoring project was completed in June 2017. It included the facility wastewater treatment system and nine points within the community to measure concentrations of hydrogen sulfide. Results from this project are currently being analyzed and will help inform next steps. Region 6 continues to build on its previous collaborations with ADEQ by encouraging them to integrate EJ principles into their permitting processes and using other tools like EJ Screen and giving guidance on improving their Title VI program.

### **Donna Reservoir and Canal**

The 400-acre Donna Reservoir and Canal Superfund site, located near economically distressed communities (Colonias) in Hidalgo County, supplies drinking water for the cities of Donna and North Alamo and irrigation water for surrounding agricultural areas. The Donna Canal Irrigation System contains sediment contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and fish in the

canal system are also contaminated with PCBs. EPA first detected PCBs in the fish in 1993 and a fish possession ban has been implemented since then. EPA removed 38,255 edible-size fish that were potentially contaminated with PCBs from the Donna Reservoir and Canal System between 2008 and 2012. In spite of the signs and warnings, civic organizations actions and previous outreach efforts - people continue to fish in the contaminated area and may be selling or taking the contaminated fish home for consumption. PCBs can cause certain types of cancer (liver, gastrointestinal, thyroid); impact hormone and immune systems; prenatal and neonatal concerns (breastfeeding); and developmental delays in children (motor skills, short term memory, reduced birth weight).

The source of PCBs in the canal system is a concrete pipe (a siphon) and EPA believes that the materials used to construct the siphon (i.e., caulk or sealant) may contain PCBs. Water from the Rio Grande flows through the siphon under the Arroyo Colorado into the canal system. R6 continues to work with state, federal agencies and advocacy groups holding meeting to discuss remedial options for the site, suspected sources of contamination, and other/technical enforcement issues. The most recent fish removal was in May, 2017 and the entire area is being fenced off to prevent access and new signage erected warning of the contaminated fish and the danger of consumption.

### **City of Anthony, NM**

The city of Anthony, NM, an underserved colonia incorporated in 2010, encompasses 4.0 square miles and a population of 9,363. The City is located approximately 24 miles northwest of downtown El Paso, TX and 23 miles south of Las Cruces, New Mexico and is bordered by rural communities and farms, desert lands, and sits on the NM-TX state line. As a newly incorporated municipality, the city faces problems with sustained economic development and long term community development challenges redeveloping vacant parcels, funding for new and maintaining existing infrastructure, and improving conditions of substandard and aging housing. The city's real property consists of a Municipal Complex, library and baseball field and they have identified the need for an updated master plan, parks and recreational facilities, uses for a vacant and underutilized downtown, sidewalks especially on school routes, and desires to annex nearby land which would double the size of the city.

As a former Making a Visible Difference community, the city of Anthony received Brownsfield Inventory Technical Assistance from the R6 Targeted Brownfields Assessment & Land Revitalization Coordinator via Kansas State University (KSU) Technical Assistance for Brownfields (TAB) communities. This spearheaded the Rio Grande Council of Governments efforts as they worked with a developer to develop Main street. EPA's Office of Sustainability provided technical assistance that utilized elements of the Green and Complete Streets and the Linking Land Use and Water Quality tools, and identified key community issues, prioritized goals, and specific actions to achieve more complete streets and advance green infrastructure practices within the community. A November 2016 Small MS4 Working Collaboratively Workshop provided by New Mexico Environment Department's Surface Water Bureau and R6 water quality staff focused on local strategies oriented towards protecting water quality and a July 31- August 2, 2017, Design Workshop on Smart Growth Implementation, explored opportunities for actions and created visual renderings for two key city corridors and gateway

locations. The City is now knowledgeable on next steps on how they could support more environmentally and fiscally sustainable growth, highlighting specific code and policy options.

### **Alexandria/Pineville, LA**

EPA Region 6 provided assistance to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) for the regulatory oversight of two creosoting facilities, one in Alexandria and the other in Pineville as part of on-going cleanup efforts. About 26,600 low income and minority persons in Alexandria and Pineville live within a 2-mile radius of each creosoting site. Under the Making a Visible Difference initiative, EPA staff members joined as a team to create a collaborative approach to address the multiple environmental issues in the community, improve internal/external communications and bring concepts of sustainability to the community. With the help of a Skeo contractor, the Community Sustainability Network, a network of members from the community and industry, was developed to discuss and resolve community issues. The idea was first introduced to community stakeholders on February 2, 2016, and has since been led by Representative Jeff Hall with the help of the Rapides Area Planning Commission. EPA hosted a Healthy Homes and Healthy School Training that was conducted by the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit in Alexandria, LA and assisted the Alexandria/Pineville Making a Visible Difference Cross divisional team in helping to create a safer environment for children in the community. EPA conducted sampling in Hunter Park, Pineville Soccer Park and at the Rapides Training Academy, a school for special needs children, to address the community's concern of potential impacts from these facilities to nearby areas where children play or go to school. Initial sampling indicated the presence of dioxin/furans, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and polychlorinated biphenyls in the school yard at the Rapides Training Academy. In response EPA responded by collecting wipe samples within the school. To accomplish this task, EPA staff developed a new sample methodology to evaluate the risks for the school children. The analytical results determined that dioxin levels in the school were within safe risk levels for the children. The LDEQ collected 24-hour air sampling data from the mobile air monitoring laboratory (MAML) from both creosoting sites from 2013-2015. Three sets of data were collected and sent to the state Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) for review, a report explaining how the data relates to the community's health was uploaded into LDEQ's electronic data management system (EDMS) on 6/15/2017. During the process of determining where to sample, a community member pointed out foundry material at the Ruston Foundry Superfund site. Kansas City Southern Railroad went back to excavate the remaining metal filings from the foundry operations that had become buried over time, along with some old building foundation material. The Ruston Foundry site can now be assessed by the City of Alexandria for future-use planning. The Community Data Assessment Report, which summarizes the focused projects carried out since 2015, is in the process of being finalized with LDEQ.

### **EJSCREEN**

Region 6 worked with the Office of Environmental Justice to provide EJSCREEN training for 46 Region 6 employees from the Enforcement, Water, Permits, Superfund and NEPA Programs to help gauge, identify, prevent and address environmental justice issues and allow for enhanced communication and awareness on overarching environmental issues and activities. For hands on experience, the training consisted of case studies on sites for Superfund, NPDES, RCRA and Air which motivated employee utilization of the tool in it day to day work.

EPA staff in Region 6 used the EJSCREEN tool for train-the-trainer; drafting NPDES Permits for New Mexico and several tribes in Region 6; collaboration with the States of Texas and Louisiana emergency response for Hurricane Harvey to screen geographic locations for overburdened populations who were disproportionately exposed to or at risk from different types of pollution, site locations identification, targeting, education and outreach audience and assessment. Over 300 EJ Screens of areas of potential concerns were conducted in compliance, targeting and enforcement activities. EJSCREEN Lead Paint indicator is used by the Lead Paint Renovate Right Program as a guide in our four unauthorized states to identify potential lead paint concentrations in older homes. EJSCREEN has also aided in the distribution of environmental educational materials to localities where the materials would be the most effective.